



Presenter: New research has found that an artificial hip developed in Exeter in the 60's is still problem free in the vast majority of patients fitted with it. The implant is now used in thousands of hip operations nationwide but studies are still being carried out in Devon where it was invented.

Here's our health reporter, Marcus Wraight.  
(Victor Small working in garden- voice over)

M Wraight: Victor Small is a keen gardener and remains fairly active, even though he's a day short of 83. He's lived in Sidford all his life. After getting arthritis in his late 40's, he then had two hip replacements, the 1<sup>st</sup> 33 years ago and the 2<sup>nd</sup> 12 years later. He hasn't had a problem with them since.

Victor Small (to camera): They said it could possibly be seven years, I think that was about the limit they gave it. They said they could always do another one, always do a secondary one if anything went bad, but I'm still counting.

M Wraight (Voice over) He's been fitted with 2 so-called Exeter hips. The implant was developed in the city in the 60's.

(To Camera- holding hip) And this is it, this is the Exeter hip. Now most people when they have a hip replacement operation have absolutely no idea what sort of a hip they're going to be fitted with, but research has found that in patients fitted with this 33 years ago, 9 out of 10 who are still alive today are still walking around on the same hip.

(Voice over) Clinician's in Exeter continue to fit them and are still researching its progress but it took decades for the hip's clinical success to be recognised. Now it's fitted worldwide.

G Gie: It was a radical design at that time and many believed it wouldn't function and in fact it took about 20 years to actually convince the world that it was a very good hip and worked very well. So the sales were pretty small until the early 1990's but in the last 10-15 years they've increased hugely.

(Back to Victor's garden)  
M Wraight: Most patients expect a hip about 15 years and the national guidelines only go up to ten. So Victor Small, he's more than happy that such an experimental procedure all those years ago has meant being able to live a long and active life.



which was highly polished and wedge shaped and it functions extremely well because it actually protects the bone cement which holds it in place.

- Michael Chequer: And is that what makes it last longer than another type of hip replacements?
- Graham Gie: Indeed, it's the fact that it is highly polished, wedged and doesn't have a collar so it can act like a taper.
- Michael Chequer: Now I say it's not just fitted in Exeter, presumably these are used all over the country now are they?
- Graham Gie: Oh indeed, the National Joint Register in the UK has been recently set up and after the first year it was determined that 38 per cent of all hip replacement stems inserted in the UK were in fact Exeter stems.
- Michael Chequer: So why isn't everyone using them?
- Graham Gie: Well that has something to do with your training, what your predecessor used, but certainly as more and more of the senior surgeons are retiring, the Exeter has been taken on by the younger surgeons starting their consultant positions at this time.
- Michael Chequer: And presumably, if they're lasting longer now it means, I'm slightly talking about something I know nothing about here, I realise, but as a layman, I'm guessing that might mean you'd use them on a younger patient because you need to trust that it's going to last the life of the patient.
- Graham Gie: Yes indeed we do use it on younger patients, but one can't claim that it's going to last the life of the patient, all we know is that in our very long term review, we have several patients like Mr Small who've had their hips in 30 years and longer and of course because those patients are still alive, they were obviously young when they had their hip replacements done. We've recently reviewed 325 consecutive patients who are now beyond 15 years who show close to 100 per cent success rate and of those patients who were under 50, 97% still have the same stem and position after 15 years. So it's not your age, it's actually your quality of life. If someone's quality of life is significantly affected by their hip then we will offer them a hip replacement.
- Michael Chequer: And I know that people's quality of life can be vastly, I mean the difference can be enormous, when they have hip replacement surgery. What do you think are the next new big developments?



- Graham Gie: Well it's going to be very difficult for anyone to improve on the thigh bone side. That's where the results are really impressive. The improvements will come on the socket side, that's on the pelvis side and almost certainly it'll be the bearing surfaces which will play the biggest role in further advancement.
- Michael Chequer: OK, well thank you very much indeed for talking to us this morning. It's an interesting subject and it must be really satisfying from your perspective, just briefly, working in an area which can make such a huge difference to someone's life.
- Graham Gie: Indeed, it's probably the most satisfying operation which I've ever performed and indeed why I became a hip surgeon. Patients are extremely grateful, the short term success is outstandingly good and if a reliable hip replacement is used as you've heard this morning, we can expect patients to do well for 30 years and longer.
- Michael Chequer: Well thank you very much and keep up the good work.
- Graham Gie: Thank you very much.
- Michael Chequer: That's consultant orthopaedic surgeon Graham Gie, who specialises in hip replacements and has been working in Exeter, home of the Exeter hip, since 1985.